

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 SS-14 INRE-00 INR-05 L-01
SAB-01 SIL-01 EB-04 PA-01 SP-02 /040 W
-----082059 172351Z /62
O 172130Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5752

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, SOPN, PBOR, PQ
SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE RALLY IN CANAL ZONE

REF: PANAMA 1023

SUMMARY ABOUT 750 EMPLOYEES ATTENDED FEBRUARY 16 RALLY AND
HEARD WILLIAM DRUMMOND CALL ON THEM TO GO SICK. ANOTHER SPEAKER
ALLEGED THAT AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND PRESIDENT MEANY
WERE HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS REGARDING ADEQUACY OF PROTECTION
OF LABOR INTERESTS UPON WHICH THEIR ENDORSEMENT OF TREATY
RATIFICATION WAS BASED. AS OF 1300 FEBRUARY 17 PANCANAL ADVISES
THAT THERE ARE ONLY A FEW SCATTERED ABSENCES FROM WORK, WITH
NO EFFECT ON ANY ASPECT OF COMPANY/GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS.
END SUMMARY.

1. EMPLOYEE RALLY IN CANAL ZONE WAS HELD AS ANNOUNCED
(REFTEL) FROM 1900 TO 2100 FEBRUARY 16. CANAL ZONE
POLICE ESTIMATE ABOUT 750 PERSONS ATTENDED, WHILE
OTHER ESTIMATES RANGED UP TO 1500 (IN A PANAMA CITY
PAPER ON FRIDAY). A FAIR SEGMENT OF CROWD APPEARED
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TO BE CURIOUS ONLOOKERS RATHER THAN COMMITTED PARTICIPANTS.

2. MASTER OF CEREMONIES WAS LOUIS FATTOROSI, PRESIDENT
OF CANAL ZONE CENTRAL LABOR UNION-METAL TRADES COUNCIL.
FATTOROSI DISCLAIMED CLU-MTCHORGANIZATIONAL SPONSORSHIP
OF RALLY, HOWEVER, ATTRIBUTING IT TO INDIVIDUAL LABOR
LEADERS WHO WERE SUPPORTERS OF DRUMMOND. HE DESCRIBED

"PRESSURES" BROUGHT ON HIM IN JANUARY BY NATIONAL AFL-CIO AND AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS TO KEEP HIM FROM JOINING CONSERVATIVE CAUCUS "TRUTH YQUAD" ON CANAL TREATY.

3. SEVERAL OTHER US-CITIZEN UNION LEADERS SPOKE BUT (CONTRARY TO PREVIOUS RUMORS) NO PANAMANIAN CPTIZNES DID SO, NOR DID ANY CIVPC COUNCIL LEADERS. SPEECHES CONCENTRATED ON LABOR ISSUES SUCH AS PAY AND RETIRZMENT AND ON POLITICAL ATTACKS ON TREATY OR ON GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA.

4. MOST MODERATE SPEAKER WAS JAMES J. O' DONNELL, PRESIDENT OF LOCAL 14, AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES. O'DONNELL REPORTED ON LABOR MEETING WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN ON FEBRUARY 10 AND READ A LETTER FROM LEGAL ADVISER HANSELL TO LANDON BUTLER REGARDING RETIREMENT AND JOB PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE FOR CANAL EMPLOYEES. (HE NOTED THAT IN THIS CASE THE STATE DEPARTMENT APPEARED TO BE ACTING AS A FRIEND OF THE WORKFORCE, AHREMARK WHICH EVOKED ONLY AN UNEASY STIR FROM THE CROWD.) O'DONNELL SAID THAT ACCORDING TO KENNETH BLAYLOCK, NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF AFGE, INADEQUACY OF LABOR GUARANTEES AND BENEFITS AND INSUBSTANTIALITY OF OFFICIAL "ASSURANCES" TO DATE WERE CAUSING SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL UNION PRESIDENTS, AND PRESIDENT MEANY HIMSELF, TO HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THEIR ENDORSEMENT OF NEW TREATIES. O'DONNELL SAID AFL-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING IN FLORIDA NEXT WEEK WOULD CONSIDER THIS PROBLEM AND WOULD BE ASKED TO DEMAND THAT EXECUTIVE MAKE PUBLIC IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION CONTAINING GUARANTEES THAT LABOR CONSIDERED ADEQUATE PRIOR TO SENATE RATIFICATION TREATIES.

5. DRUMMOND, THE FEATURED SPEAKER, CAREFULLY ESCHEWED OPENLY POLITICAL ATTACKS THAT HAVE CHARACTERIZED MOST OF HIS PREVIOUS STATEMENTS. HE PROCLAIMED HIMSELF THE AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATIVE OF EVERYONE WHO WORKED OR LIVED IN THE CANAL ZONE, DESCRIBED HIS EFFORTS ON THEIR BEHALF IN WASHINGTON, AND CONCLUDED THAT WITHOUT PUBLICATION OF IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION CONTAINING ADEQUATE GUARANTEES FOR LABOR, TREATY SHOULD NOT BE RATIFIED. HE CALLED ON WORKFORCE TO FOLLOW HIM IN A SEVEN-DAY SICKOUT DUE TO "THE RUSSIAN FLU", SAYING ONLY THUS COULD AFL-CIO AND SENATE ATTENTION BE FOCUSED ON GRIEVANCES OF CANAL ZONE LABOR. HE CONCLUDED THAT HE WAS GOING SICK ON FRIDAY, AND REPEATED HIS CALL FOR ENTIRE WORKFORCE TO DO THE SAME TO FORCE IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION INTO THE OPEN AND SECURE ADEQUATE LABOR GUARANTEES IN IT.

6. RALLY WAS COVERED BY LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA, INCLUDING U.S. WIRE SERVICES AND A TV FILM CREW (BELIEVED TO BE NBC). LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE WAS SLIGHT FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17; ONLY PAPER THAT MENTIONED RALLY WAS "MATUTINO", WHICH PRINTED FRONT-PAGE PICTURES OF DRUMMOND AND CROWD WITH A BRIEF CAPTION.

7. PANCANAL ADVISED EMBASSY AS OF 1300 FEBRUARY 17 THAT IT HAD EXPERIENCED NO NOTICEABLE EFFECT ON ANY ASPECT OF COMAPNY GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND SAW NO FIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN UNAUTHORIZED ABSENTEEISM. ONLY A FEW SCATTERED INDIVIDUAL CASES OF DUBIOUS ABSENCES WERE NOTED (AND SOME OF THESE, THEY OBSERVE, MIGHT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAVE OCCURRED IN ANY EVENT DUE TO THREE-DAY WEEKEND STARTING TOMORROW).

8. DURING RALLY, FATTOROSI CONFIRMED NEWS REPORTS THAT MEMBERS OF NATIONAL CONSERVATIVE CAUCUS "TRUTH SQUAD", INCLUDING NEW HAMPSHIRE GOVERNOR MELDRIM THOMSON, WOULD VISIT CANAL ZONE NEXT WEEK, HOLDING FUND-RAISING DINNER AT AMERICAN LEGION CLUB ON FEBRUARY 21 AND RALLY AT BALBOA STADIUM THE FOLLOWING EVENING. HE URGED ALL TO ATTEND RALLY.

9. COMMENT: SO FAR, DRUMMOND'S CALL FOR A SICK-OUT IS A TOTAL WASHOUT. HOWEVER, THERE ARE SOME RUMORS THAT MASS SICKOUT WILL NOT START UNTIL FEBRUARY 21, TO COINCIDE WITH RESUMPTION OF SENATE DEBATE AND AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING. WE MAY NOT BE OUT OF WOODS YET. AN ADDITIONAL FACTOR IS THAT PANCANAL IS DISTRIBUTING TO ALL EMPLOYEES TODAY THE FINAL VERSION OF EARLY RETIREMENT PLAN TO BE INCORPORATED IN IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION. DESPITE LIBERALIZATION OVER CURRENT LAW, SOME SEGMENTS OF WORKFORCE ARE CERTAIN TO ARGUE THAT THIS IS INADEQUATE. PANCANAL WILL CLOSELY MONITOR ABSSENTEEISM OVER WEEKEND AND ON TUESDAY; EMBASSY WILL ADVISE IF ANY PATTERN OF DELIBERATE ABYENTEEISM BECOMES VISIBLE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, CANALS, OPPOSITION PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PANAMA01128
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: HR IS ALSO LIMDIS
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780074-1094
Format: TEL
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780241/aaaabirk.tel
Line Count: 161
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bbefa2d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS, ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS, ONLY
Reference: 78 PANAMA 1023
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3561556
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EMPLOYEE RALLY IN CANAL ZONE
TAGS: ELAB, SOPN, PBOR, PQ
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bbefa2d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014